

Honorable Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

My name is Debbie Catuccio. I am a resident of Goshen,CT

I am here to day to oppose many of the gun control bills which I feel will reduce or severely impede my ability to adequately protect myself. Many will add undue financial burdens on me and place restrictions on the exercise of my Second Amendment rights of self protection. Additionally, I am concerned about the financial and employment impacts to firearms manufacturing companies in the State of Connecticut and what that will mean for our struggling economy.

I feel there is a rush to pass legislation due to the high emotions following the Sandy Hook tragedy and the political pressures being brought to bear by political action groups with ulterior motives. There is no emergency at this time and no need to work in haste to meet an arbitrary deadline. Please don't compound this tragedy by passing bad laws which will make me, and other legal firearms owners, felons with the swipe of your pens as you seem poised to do. Can't we first get the full report of the State Police investigation to ensure we all have a full understanding of all of the factors leading up to this heinous act? Only then can we be certain what measures could and should be taken to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of such mass murder. Sadly, no action you take can fully eliminate the potential for violence perpetrated by those hell-bent on committing such atrocities.

The following are my reasons for opposing specified bills currently before you:

SB 1076: An Act Concerning the Reduction of Gun Violence

OPPOSE: This bill is unduly burdensome on many levels to include added costs for annual firearm registration with associated background check and costs. It requires obtaining an ammunition ID card which also requires a background check with added costs, especially given the ID card is caliber-specific for each caliber of firearm a person owns. The permit renewal for a carry permit will go from every five years to an annual permit with background check and associated costs. It prohibits an online ammunition purchase which means I may not be able to purchase ammunition at a reduced cost from a supplier and may not be able to purchase any ammunition if I can't find it locally.

If a person is denied a registration card for a firearm, there is no appeal to the BFPE as current law allows but to the Superior Court. This is required for each registration and can add up quickly on an individual firearm basis. If the appeal is denied, the decision is final and the applicant must immediately surrender the firearm for which the application was sought. Failure to do so will result in confiscation of the firearm within 48 hours. I believe this is unconstitutional and amounts to seizure of private property without compensation.

There is so much wrong with this bill that I could spend pages of comments on this one

alone. In the interest of brevity, let me just summarize by saying this apparent “omnibus” bill is abhorrent to the US and Connecticut Constitutions, unduly punishes legal firearms owners with burdensome fees and appears to be trying to close the State’s budget deficit on the backs of legal firearms owners. I oppose the entire bill.

Proposed Bill No. 124: An Act Banning Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines

OPPOSE: This bill places a limitation on the capacity of magazines to 10 rounds. I strongly oppose this bill since it will make an instant felon of many legal firearm owners with a swipe of the pen. Many commonly used semi-automatic handguns have magazines with a capacity of over 10 rounds. Some of these firearms do not have removable magazines and thus, can only accommodate the standard size magazine which is integral to the firearm. This bill would render those handguns illegal. Additionally, I believe 10 rounds are insufficient for self-protection in a home invasion scenario where intruders usually travel in numbers greater than 2 or more. Accuracy will be diminished by the stressfulness of the situation, resulting in more rounds needed to thwart the assault. The Norwich Police Dept. recently had to fire on an armed man. Of the 41 shots fired by the police, only 6 rounds hit their target. If these trained professionals have that degree of accuracy in such a scenario, why would I be expected to be so accurate as to need no more than 10 rounds if I’m under assault? The police respond with back up officers each carrying a handgun with multiple magazines of 17 rounds or more. Why should I be expected to adequately protect myself with so much less when I am the only one “on scene”? I am my First Responder; the police are second to the scene.

I live in Goshen, a rural town with no police force or Resident State Trooper. Any police response to my home will come from the CT State Police barracks in Canaan which is 16.6 miles away. Under the best of circumstances (trooper sitting in his car at the barracks and available to respond), the response time to my house from those barracks will be approximately 25 minutes. I will be on my own for that length of time. I will have only myself to rely on for protection. If all I have is a 10 round magazine, working under stress and with possibly multiple intruders, the chances of my surviving that attack will be greatly reduced. The purpose of a larger magazine is to minimize the need to manipulate the firearm while trying to mitigate the threat, thereby increasing my chances of survival.

Making me less safe with reduced magazine sizes will do nothing to reduce violent crime since the criminals will have access to larger capacity magazines. There are thousands already on the market in CT. And if those magazines on the market ever do dry up (as Sen. Feinstein seems to reason), magazines can be made on 3-D printers. Criminals, by definition, will not comply with the law. Don’t put people like me at a further disadvantage by limiting my ability to defend myself through reduced magazine capacity. As a woman, a firearm is a force equalizer, if not a force multiplier. Women are already at a physical disadvantage to would-be rapists and assailants; don’t make matters worse by reducing our ability to defend ourselves.

HB 6162: An Act Concerning Ineligibility for a Permit to Carry a Pistol or Revolver

or and Eligibility Certificate Based on a Prior Hospitalization.

OPPOSE: While I understand the desire to keep firearms out of the hands of mentally deficient individuals, particularly following the Newtown tragedy, I worry that this bill goes too far in penalizing a firearm owner whose only "transgression" is having someone in the home who has been hospitalized for unspecified "psychiatric disabilities." This bill seems to remove the requirement that said hospitalization was ordered by a probate court. So if someone has admitted himself for depression or similar concern where he is not a threat to himself or others, his wife/son/daughter/ or any other family member(s) in the home is at risk of losing their firearms. We have already seen such laws abused in California where a woman self-admitted to a hospital for depression. Due to a mistake written in her chart once she was there which indicated involuntary committal, her husband had to surrender three firearms. This bill needs to include more oversight by an adjudicator to avoid legal owners of firearms from losing their Second Amendment Rights simply because someone sought mental health services. If not carefully crafted, it seems to me that it may have the unintended consequence of people in need of mental health services not seeking it out for fear of causing their family members to lose their private property (gun collections) along with their ability for self-defense.

HB 6595: An Act Prohibiting the Discharge of Firearms Near Private Residences.

OPPOSE: This bill prohibits discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of a residential building not owned by the person or without the property owner's consent. My concern here is that the bill will prevent operation of commercial shooting ranges, especially indoor ranges, which are often in mix-zoned areas. There is such an indoor range in Torrington for example that would not be able to operate if this proposed bill became law.

SB 1071: An Act Concerning Additional Funding for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund

OPPOSE: I don't believe this bill is very wise and will result in a mass-migration of good paying manufacturing jobs out of the State, further crippling our weak economy. This bill seems punitive in requiring burdensome taxes on firearms manufacturers and importers. It requires an annual license of \$2500.00 just to operate the business. It further requires a 3 yr. surety bond just to do business in this State. There is a tax of \$ 10.00 per firearm (which will likely be passed on to consumers). A monthly record-keeping requirement for numbers of firearms sold, amount of tax payable, and "any other information" the Commissioner deems necessary will no doubt add extra operational costs to these businesses in order to remain in compliance to avoid the penalties for late payments, possible liens on the property, or loss of license. The bill would subject them to audits and investigation by the Commissioner of Revenue Services. All of these measures will result in more costs for operation and compliance. As I understand, the firearms industry in CT supplies our economy with approximately 3000 direct jobs and, combined with secondary manufacturing jobs for component parts, metal heating and

treatment, etc., adds up to approximately 7000 jobs. Can CT really afford to risk such a loss of jobs and the revenues associated with them by making the environment for these manufacturers and importers so onerous? It just seems that CT is going out of its way to make this State very unfriendly to business. We really must rethink this type of unnecessary taxation and regulatory smothering of our manufacturing base or we will be bankrupt with even higher unemployment than we have now.

Thank you for taking the time to read these comments. Please take the time necessary to weigh your decisions extremely carefully. I know you are all working very hard to "do the right thing." I would just remind you that sometimes doing less is the right thing and is certainly preferable to making the wrong decisions based on the desire to just "do something."

And above all else, please remember the Oath that you all swore to uphold the Constitution of CT, to include **Article I, Section 15: "Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state."** Please do not make me a felon with the swipe of your pen or the call of your vote.

Sincerely,
Debbie Catuccio